

Message Text

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TAGS: TECH, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN PRESS COMMENT ON NUCLEAR POLICY

1. JULY 20 "TIMES OF INDIA" CARRIES AN EDITORIAL BY ITS RESIDENT EDITOR GIRILAL JAIN ENTITLED "NO MORE NUCLEAR TESTS." JAIN, SOON TO TAKE OVER AS CHIEF "TIMES OF INDIA" EDITOR IN BOMBAY, WRITES THAT ALTHOUGH IT CANNOT BE DENIED THAT THE GOI HAS BEEN UNDER INTENSE US PRESSURE TO FOREGO NUCLEAR TESTS, IT DOES NOT FOLLOW THAT PM DESAI'S POLICY IN THIS MATTER GOES AGAINST THE NATIONAL INTEREST. "THE PRESENT SET-UP IN WASHINGTON," SAYS JAIN, DESCRIBING THE ALLEGED PRESSURE, "IS DETERMINED TO HAVE ITS WAY ON THIS ISSUE AND INDIA CERTAINLY IS IN NO POSITION TO COMPEL IT TO MODIFY IS STAND." HOWEVER MUCH IT MAY RESENT US "HEAVY-HANDED TACTIS," IT HAS NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN FOR ENRICHED FUEL FOR TARAPUR, SINCE EVEN THE SOVIET UNION IS LIKELY TO IMPOSE JUST AS STRICT TERMS AS THE US. JAIN EMPHASIZES THAT IN ANY EVENT INDIA "HAS NOTHING TO GAIN FROM HOLDING ANOTHER TEST IN THE NEAR FUTURE." IT IS NOT AND CANNOT BE A PIONEER IN USING PNE'S FOR CONSTRUCTION WORK, SINCE ONLY THE SOVIET

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UNION HAS DONE USEFUL WORK IN THIS FIELD. JAIN GOES ON TO WRITE THAT THE 1974 TEST WAS CONDUCTED SOLELY FOR THE POLITICAL PURPOSE OF RESTORING MRS. GANDHI'S PRESTIGE, BUT THE TEST WAS A MISCALCULATION. NOT ONLY WAS IT NOT NECESSARY TO ENHANCE INDIAN NATIONALISM, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY IT AROUSED THE SUSPICIOONS OF THE US AND CANADA, THE TWO COUNTRIES ON WHICH INDIA MOST

DEPENDENT FOR NUCLEAR FUEL AND TECHNOLOGY. IN ADDITION, IT AROUSED FALSE HOPES AMONG SOME INDIANS THAT THE COUNTRY WAS ON THE BRINK OF BECOMING A NUCLEAR WEAPONS POWER, WHEN IN FACT THE TEST STRAINED INDIA'S RESOURCES. JAIN ALSO NOTES THAT NEHRU HAD INITIATED THE NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ON THE MISTAKEN NOTION THAT INDIA WAS CHINA'S COMPETITOR IN ASIA AND MUST HAVE THE NUCLEAR OPTION IN CASE CHINA WAS DEVELOPING A NUCLEAR ARSENAL OF ITS OWN. THIS MISCONCEPTION HAS NOW BEEN BELIED AND CHINA ITSELF HAS RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS. JAIN CONCLUDES BY SAYING THAT CHINA MAY STILL PERCEIVE THE NEED FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS BECAUSE OF ITS LONG BORDERS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, "BUT INDIA HAS NO SUCH COMPULSIONS, APART FROM THE ONE ARISING OUT OF THE ANTICIPATED SHORTAGE OF CONVENTIONAL SOURCES OF ENERGY. THE BREEDER REACTOR MAY BE RELEVANT IN THIS CONNECTION, BUT NOT EXPLOSIONS."

2. THE JULY 20 "ECONOMIC TIMES" CARRIES AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "ATOMIC SLOWDOWN". NOTING THAT INDIA'S NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IS FAR BEHIND ITS ORIGINAL TIMETABLE AND THAT ONLY TWO COMMERCIAL NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS ARE IN OPERATION, THE WRITER STATES THAT AMONG THE CAUSES FOR THIS DELAY IS THE "DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN COLLABORATION." "WE ARE EVIDENTLY BEING SUBJECTED TO INCREASED INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES
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PARTICULARLY AFTER THE 1974 PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSION." THE WRITER NOTES THE FEELING THAT THE 12 TONS OF FUEL FOR TARAPUR WERE SUPPLIED ON THE CONDITION THAT INDIA GIVE UP ITS RIGHT TO CONDUCT FURTHER PNE'S. THERE IS ALSO APPARENT PRESSURE TO SLOW DOWN THE FAST BREEDER REACTOR PROGRAM, AND "THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT SEEMS TO HAVE REFUSED PERMISSION TO INDIA TO EXTRACT PLUTONIUM FROM THE TARAPUR SPENT FUEL. IT IS TO BE SEEN TO WHAT EXTENT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND THESE PRESSURES." THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT "THE POSITION IS DIFFERENT FOR THE ADVANCED NATIONS...DESPITE PRESIDENT CARTER'S POLICIES", SINCE FRANCE AND WEST GERMANY ARE GOING AHEAD WITH DEVELOPING FAST BREEDER REACTORS.GOHEEN

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